

Improving the online marketing of Homekoirat S&S

Sandra Virkki

Bachelor's thesis
Degree Programme in International
Business
2016



International Business

Author or authors Sandra Virkki	Group or year of entry 2013
Title of report Improving the online marketing of Homekoirat S&S	Number of pages and appendices 22 + 4
<p>The aim of this thesis is to provide a theoretical base for creating an online marketing plan as well as to provide an example of an online marketing plan for the author's commissioner Homekoirat S&S. The commissioner has not created a marketing plan previously but Homekoirat S&S already has a quite successful business. The aim of this project is to gain more visibility for an existing company and to find out what are the best marketing tools for a SME for marketing services online.</p> <p>The theoretical framework consists of marketing and concentrates especially on marketing services. All of the examples of the marketing tools are chosen within the limitations of the small business of the commissioner and it's in the hands of the commissioner to choose which ones will be implemented in the real marketing plan.</p>	
Keywords Marketing, marketing tools, service, online, branding	

Contents

1	Introduction.....	2
2	Theoretical framework.....	3
	Online marketing; what it is and differences compared to traditional marketing	3
	2.1.1 Services marketing	3
	2.2 Branding	4
	2.2.1 Brand identity	5
	2.2.2 Brand image	5
	2.2.3 Branding elements	6
3	Research tools	7
	3.1 Research questions	8
4	Marketing plan example	9
	4.1 Branding	9
	4.2 Online marketing	10
	4.2.1 Website	10
	4.3 Website update SWOT analysis.....	12
	4.4 Social Media.....	14
	4.4.1 Facebook.....	14
	4.4.2 LinkedIn	15
	4.4.3 Instagram	15
	4.5 Social Media Platforms SWOT analysis.....	16
	4.6 Search engine optimization	18
5	Discussion	20
6	References	23
7	Appendixes.....	26

1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to improve the online marketing of an already existing company, Homekoirat S&S and to research what are the best marketing tools for marketing a service online. Also a suggestion of the marketing plan will be created.

Homekoirat S&S is a small company located in Mikkeli, Finland and it's founded in the beginning of 2012 by owners Saara Pulkkinen and Sampsa Väntsi. The company provides mold detecting services by using sniffer dogs that are trained using the similar methods as drug or explosives sniffing dogs. Homekoirat S&S offer their services to private customers as well as big companies and cities as well. The industry is quite small and overall there is only around 30 operatives around Finland, which of only a small fraction does this as their primary job.

As data collection method the author has conducted small qualitative interviews for the commissioners' previous customers in order to gather data for the website. Other relevant data was gathered by using existing researches and literature of the subject and by familiarizing with the commissioners business plan.

2 Theoretical framework

Online marketing; what it is and differences compared to traditional marketing

Definition of online marketing is to reach consumers via online channels. Online marketing requires the use of internet and has a wider range of possibilities than traditional marketing and advertising.

Online marketing can also be referred to as Internet marketing, Web marketing or digital marketing. (Technopedia, 2015)

There is a wide range of forms of online marketing. For example, display marketing (pop up, SEM (search engine marketing), SEO (search engine optimization), social media, video and content marketing are typical forms of online marketing. Compared to traditional marketing and advertising (print media, tv, telemarketing etc.) online marketing offers more possibilities to reach more targeted audiences (for example a toy manufacturer can place their advertisements as pop ups in games meant for children) and wider audience at once. It's possible to only target some specific advertisements for one location only or spread it all over the globe.

One of the most remarkable differences between traditional marketing and online marketing is the cost. Traditional marketing can be extremely expensive; for example an add in a page of the new's paper Helsingin Sanomat can cost up to 60 000€ (HS.fi, 2016) while the costs for online marketing can start with a price of 0€. Obviously one can get money spent in online marketing as well, but usually traditional marketing is seen as the more expensive option.

Using online marketing also comes with a big benefit; a company owner can easily measure their site's visitors and the time spent there, most clicked adds and links and gather a tremendous amount of other valuable data to analyze. Online marketing also offers the user a chance to interact and influence; a user can comment and share the advertisement in multiple different platforms, leading up to getting valuable customer feedback.

2.1.1 Services marketing

Services are intangible, meaning they cannot be stored, they are 'consumed' at the same time they are produced and services are unique every time. Even the same service pro-

vider cannot offer the exact same service experience twice. (Management Study Guide, 2015).

Services marketing is a relatively new phenomenon, since back in the industrial era services were considered as add-ons and were considered only as hospitality, transportation or professional services provided by the public sector (Grönroos 2007, 2-3). Services marketing has gained importance during the end of the 20th century, in the 1980's, when service sector started to grow and emerged as a significant employer (Management Study Guide, 2015).

Nowadays there are multiple providers for every type of service so marketing is coming more and more important. The service provider needs to stand out and make a good first impression, which some refer as 'moment of truth' (the moment when customer is offered the chance to form an opinion of the company or service) (Hyken, 2016). These moments of truths are extremely critical and can make or break the relationship with the customer (Management Study Guide, 2015). Since service providers are selling intangibles it's important they reach to the customer's expectations and reach to exceed them.

2.2 Branding

Branding is a company's best asset when it comes to company recognition. For example, the world's most known and recognized brand is Apple (Forbes, 2015), since their logo is known all over the world and recognized by the majority of people. The word "brand" means the company is identified by the consumers just by the visual elements: logo, slogan, advertisement or other. *"A successful brand creates and sustains a strong, positive and lasting impression in the mind of the buyer"* (Fill 2002, 339)

Branding is usually considered to be just for big companies but the small and medium sized (SME's) companies can benefit from it as well.

Branding is a long-term project and it requires a lot of time from the marketing communications. Basically the goal in branding is to create a positive picture of the company or of the product or service in a way that when a consumer sees a logo or hears a slogan, a positive image of the company is created in their mind.

From a strategic point of view, branding holds an important role. Brand can be used as a means of defending market share, to protect already established positions, to attack competitor brands and to provide a means of deterring market entry by others. There are three wide aspects of branding which enable these strategies to be accomplished; differentiation, added value and integration. (Fill 2002, 342-348)

- **Differentiation** – Branding provides a means by how a product or service can be seen different from a competitor’s similar one. It’s a method of separation for the customers to recognize what the brand stands for. However, especially the smaller companies don’t always want their brands to be differentiated from the big market leaders, hence the sometimes similar packages or logos.
- **Added Value** – Added value is about advantages. What are the benefits this company can provide compared to the next similar one. These benefits can be ‘rational attribute-based benefits’ (e.g. faster, cheaper, wider) or they can be emotionally based benefits (e.g. how the product makes you feel about the brand).
- **Integration** – For a brand to work it needs to be constantly maintained. The essence of integrated marketing communications is that all the tools used to maintain a brand and the messages used to manage brand values are consistent, coherent and enforcing. Therefore, successful branding is a product of effective integrated marketing communications.

2.2.1 Brand identity

Brand identity is the way the company wants consumers’ too see it. Brand identity is created by the company, so it may not be the exact way the consumers view the company; it’s the way the company sees itself and wants others to see it as well. The brand identity can be very different from the actual image of the company. For example Nestlé, a Swiss nutrition company mentions their vision as following: *“Each day we strive to make our products tastier and healthier choices that help consumers care for themselves and their families. This would not be possible without our unmatched R&D capability, nutrition science and passion for quality in everything we do”* (Nestlé, 2016). Nestlé started quite a big scandal back in the 1980’s due to a baby formula marketing campaign in less economically developed countries (continues in the next chapter).

2.2.2 Brand image

Brand image is the way consumers see the company and their brand. As mentioned before, Nestlé got into trouble and consumers started boycotting it since they weren’t exactly following their own vision. The boycott started in the USA in the early 1980’s and then spread all over the world. It started because the public considered Nestlé’s marketing of breast milk substitutes too aggressive, and particularly in the less economically developed countries. Some organizations claim that Nestlé’s campaigning about substitutes lead to

health problems and deaths (of babies) in these LED- countries. The main problem was actually the lack of knowledge and the use of dirty bottles to feed the babies. This is an excellent example of a company's different kind of brand identity and the real image among the consumers.

2.2.3 Branding elements

According to Kotler and Keller (van-haaften, 2016) the key elements to consider in branding are; a logo, a name, a slogan and a brand story.

The six factors to be considered when choosing the brand elements are:

- **Memorability** – The brand elements should be easy to memorize and recognize
- **Meaningfulness** - Is the customer able to link the element to the product or to the company?
- **Likability** - The element should fit the current trends and be aesthetically pleasant
- **Transferability** - Can the element cover more than one product, market segment or does it translate into multicultural environments or target groups?
- **Adaptability** – Can the element adapt the changes in the trends?
- **Protectability** – Can the element be protected with a trademark (and should it be)?

Brands have to be maintained and they need to adapt the changes in the world and in the trends in order to keep up with the constantly changing environment and in order to move forward.

3 Research tools

Research tools are valuable assets for business owners. With them business owners can collect data and monitor their success, customer satisfaction and test new products or ways of service. Using research tools the business owners can make well informed and studied decisions concerning the future and next steps of their business and measure the impact of their marketing strategy.

Research tools can be web surveys, face to face interviews or for example focus groups.

In this thesis the author has conducted small interviews with the commissioner's previous customers to collect data mainly for their website for marketing purposes (as positive customer feedback). The interview was conducted to three private customers which all had positive outcomes from using the services of Homekoirat S&S. (appendix 1).

The customers were asked five open questions about their experience with Homekoirat S&S and they were interviewed by email. The interviews were conducted in Finnish due to all the customers being Finns.

The questions were (translated into English):

1. When did you use the services of Homekoirat S&S and to what kind of property (and where was it located)?
2. What was the original reason for considering using mold-sniffing dogs and how did you end up using this particular company (Homekoirat S&S)?
3. Did you have any previous experiences on using mold-sniffing dogs?
4. What was the overall experience (of using mold-sniffing dogs) like?
5. How did the story end → Customer can describe on their own words what happened when the dogs were finished?

The interviews were conducted via email due to the request of the previous customers. All the experiences with using mold-sniffing dogs had been positive and two out of three had been able to undo the trade of the property due to the dog's findings. In one case the customer has an ongoing court case with the seller of the property, even if the dog's findings were incontrovertible.

The interviews were re-written by the author to the form of a "story" (in Finnish) and some parts of the stories will be published in the website of Homekoirat S&S if the commissioner decides to do so.

3.1 Research questions

The aim of this thesis was to increase the awareness of Homekoirat S&S and to introduce the company to wider audience and to improve the already existing online marketing presence and visibility. The research questions the author used were:

1. How to gain more visibility for an existing company?
2. How to develop the online marketing of the company?
3. What are the main factors needed to be considered when marketing a service?
4. What are the best marketing tools for this company?
5. What is included in the marketing plan

4 Marketing plan example

4.1 Branding

As mentioned above, Kotler's and Keller's four key elements for branding are a name, slogan, logo and a brand story. Homekoirat S&S is currently missing a slogan and a brand story.

The author has created a few possible slogans for Homekoirat S&S to use;

- Me haistamme homeen pois kodistas! (*"we will sniff the mold out of your home!"*)
- Haistamalla se home lähtee! (*"The mold leaves by sniffing!"*)

Storytelling is an excellent strategy to gain the possible customer's attention. Great stories make the audience *feel* something and that is a powerful way of creating connections between the customer and the company. Brand storytelling is different from basic copywriting, because brand stories shouldn't be promotional posts or fiction. Brand storytelling is an indirect way of selling a brand. (Forbes, 2013)

A brand story is not necessarily a story in the website, it might as well be a continuous marketing campaign (meaning there is a similar theme in each campaign or same characters etc.).

Homekoirat S&S could start building their brand story with these points:

- **Show don't tell** – Using descriptive language is the key to writing. Showing the audience what is happening in the surroundings rather than just describing it. Using emotionally charged language and expressions is the key. Homekoirat S&S could start by describing a house that is in good condition from the outside but the insides of the walls are filled with mold and the air is moist.
- **Create characters people care about** – Using a character the consumers can relate to is important. People who are searching for Homekoirat S&S pages are most likely having problems with mold and are in a very stressing situation in their life. Using a character that fits to that equation would be smart.
- **Stay consistent** – The brand story should be consistent with the values and image. If the target audience doesn't understand how the story relates to their problem or to the company, they will search for more understandable options.

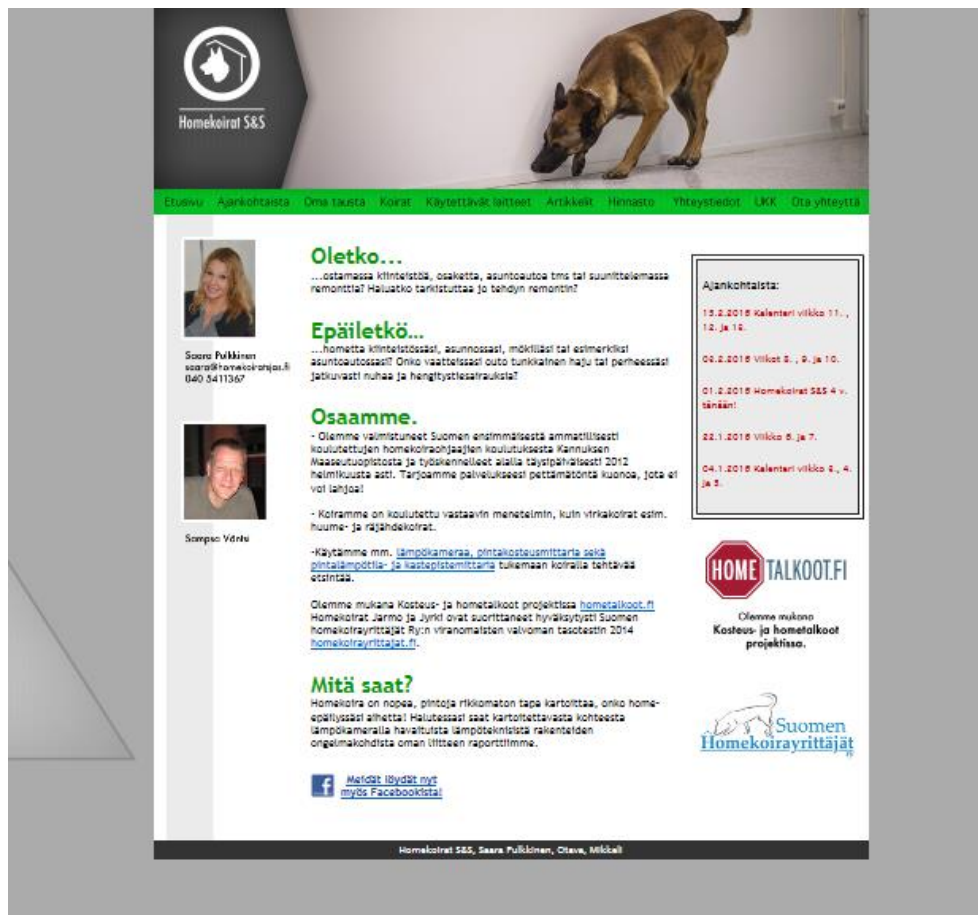
4.2 Online marketing

4.2.1 Website

Homekoirat S&S already has a functioning website. There is some small improvements that could be made in order to improve the user experience of the site.

- After other social media pages than Facebook are created, they should be linked to the website as well (Follow us on; XXX)
- Adding the customer stories (appendix 1) to the site
- Adding a possibility for the customers to leave feedback
- Updating the pictures to new and brighter and sharper ones. Hiring a professional photographer to shoot the dogs while they work?
- Updating the font colours of the site →Currently there is three different font colours in the texts, it would be advisable to use only black text and links with other colour if needed. The words can be **bolded** to stand out from the text.
- The grey background swallows the light so I would advice to use all white background in order to create more professional and welcoming looking front page.
- There is quite much going on on the front page, so maybe simplify it a little bit.
- There is quite many pages in the website, is there a possibility to gather more information under one headline (For example the “contact information” and the “contact us” pages could be combined and changing the “articles” page to “feedback and references” and adding the customer stories there with the links).
- Adding visual elements to every page. The dogs are cute and by using professional photos of them they appeal to the users feelings

One thing to think about is creating a graphic styleguide. In this guide Homekoirat S&S could specify what colours, shades, fonts, logos and what kinds of pictures etc they should and will use in all their visual production. Creating and using a graphic style guide helps to keep the content coherent and when every used colour is marked down, it's easy to find the exact same colour (for example text colour or background colour) even after years. This assures the continuity and coherence in every platform during the years. The graphic styleguide would only be for Homekoirat S&S's own use.



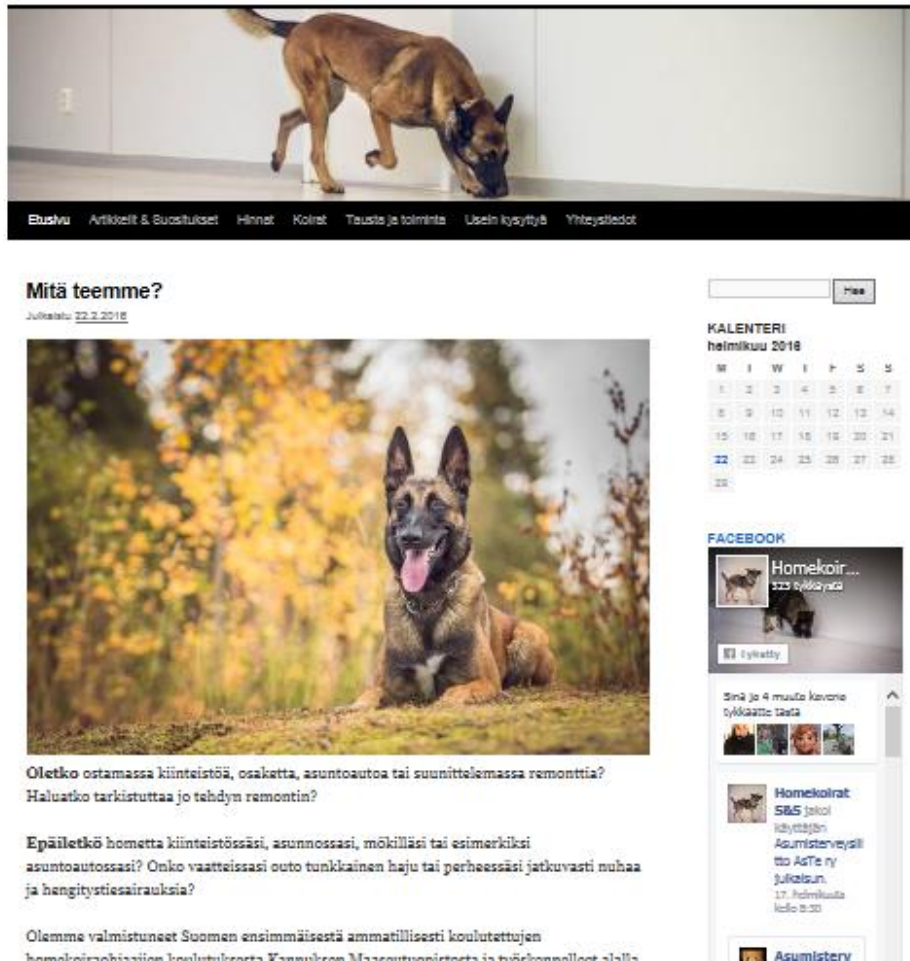
Picture 1. Print screen of Homekoirat S&S current webpage's front page

The author has created an example website for visualizing the changes. The website can be found from address: www.esimerkkihomekoirat.wordpress.com

The author created the example website to demonstrate the needed changes. The website is not ready to use and the other pages (than the front page) are blank at the moment. The commissioners are free to use the website if they will.

The website was created by using the free sample from Wordpress.

HOMEKOIRAT S&S



Picture 2. The front page of the example website created by the author

4.3 Website update SWOT analysis

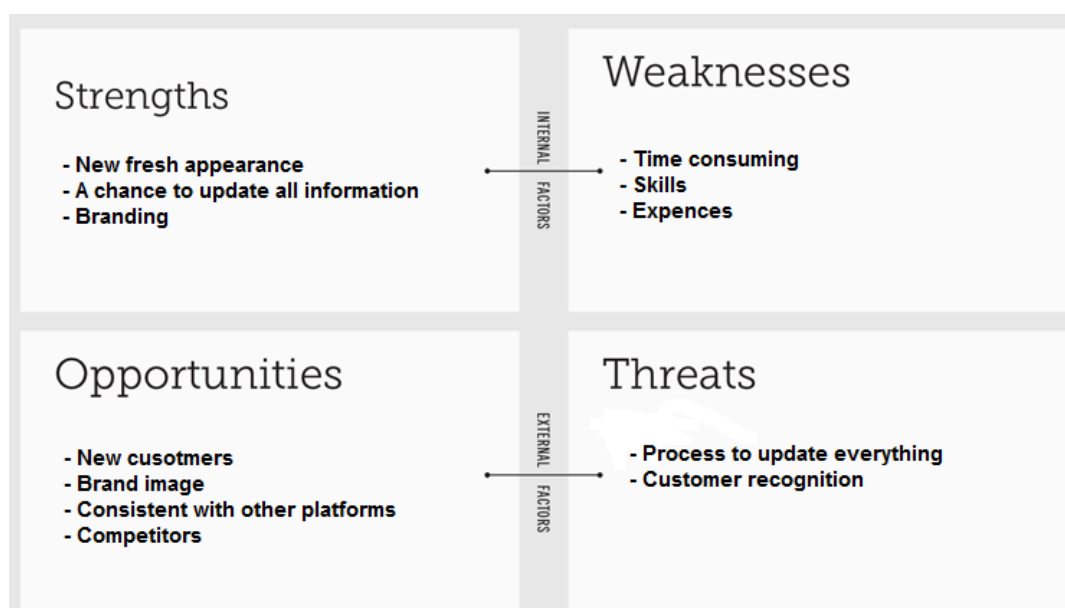


Figure 1. SWOT analysis for updating the website

Strenghts & Weaknesses

- Updating the website (visual elements, pictures & content) is a great opportunity to take time to update all the information and to freshen the appearance of the site. It's also a chance to start the branding process by choosing the colours and pictures.
- The process is going to be time consuming and occasionally very detail oriented. Depending on the changes the commissioner wants to implement, there might be some parts where there is a need to know how to do HTML coding and other complicated IT work. The author has not taken into consideration how skilled the commissioner is in this; there might be a need to hire a third party to do the job.
- Expenses depend on the commissioner's skills as well; if a professional is hired it's going to cost and this has not been taken into consideration while evaluating the expenses.

Opprtunities & Threats

- The branding and clearer website might bring new customers; visuality is a thing one must never underestimate. Fresh, clean and simple website with information easy to find are the basis for the customer to start creating the brand image of the company.
- Changing and updating the website also allows to create the other needed platform with the same visual idea at the same time (confirming they will be consistent) and to create the graphic styleguide.
- Analysing the sites of the competitors Homekoirat S&S could pick up good ideas and implement them to the updated website.
- The process might be very time consuming and during the updating the site might be out of order for some time or look confusing for a while. Also if the colour scene is changed completely it might confuse the old customers and they might not recognize it as Homekoirat S&S website.

4.4 Social Media

Using social media platforms as a marketing channel is probably the most important channel for a SME since it's very cost effective and fast way to reach many people at the same time and the business can communicate with the audience.

The important thing to remember about using social media platforms as a marketing channel is, that the sites needs to be maintained regularly and they should look consistent. If the platforms are not maintained, it might create a negative image of the company.

The author has chosen three different social media platforms that she considers to be the most beneficial for the commissioner Homekoirat S&S.

4.4.1 Facebook

Homekoirat S&S already has a quite well maintained Facebook site but few improvements that could be made are:

- Getting previous customers to leave positive feedback
- Sharing more news articles of the hazards of mold
- Getting previous (and future) customers to like the page
- Giving a prize for someone who has liked and shared the page ("if we have 500 likers at the end of the month we are giving away an all expenses paid spa vacation / toy for a dog / free mold-sniffing service" etc.)

Having many likers in the Homekoirat S&S page and to have at least some of the likers to leave positive feedback is important. If negative feedback appears, Homekoirat S&S must answer to it immediately in a way that roots out the possibility of the negative atmosphere in the site. Maintaining the Facebook page frequently is a must and answering to questions fast would be the most beneficial.

Sharing the information about Homekoirat S&S by having a competition (giving a prize for someone who has liked and shared the page) would be a great way to share knowledge of the company to a wide audience. Consumers like free prizes and this has been the trend in Facebook for some time now.

4.4.2 LinkedIn

Neither of the owners of Homekoirat S&S have a LinkedIn. LinkedIn is an online portfolio which the owners could use to professional networking with the previous customers as well as show to future clients as their resume. In LinkedIn the owners could share information about the health hazards of mold as well as connect with people who share similar interests. In LinkedIn there is also useful groups the owners of Homekoirat S&S could benefit from when looking for new customers.

In LinkedIn it is also possible to create a company page, which is always a plus. This is one more location for potential customers to find Homekoirat S&S. LinkedIn allows private users to link the company site to their private profile.

As mentioned before, LinkedIn is meant for professional purposes so having a LinkedIn page should increase the credibility of the company.

If in the future there is a need to hire employees or to look for business partners, LinkedIn is also a great platform for searching and to compare qualified people and their resumes.

4.4.3 Instagram

Instagram is a great platform for sharing interesting pictures and short videos. Homekoirat S&S could create their own hashtag (#homekoiratsjas) and use it in every picture they add to instagram.

Instagram could be the channel to take a peek behind the curtain; how the dogs are trained and what they do in their free-time, sharing tips on dogs' well-being as well as tips for other dog owners to relax.

Instagram has over 150 million users and the latest studies show that Instagram engages the user 120 times more than twitter and 58 times more than Facebook. (Koozai, 2016) Instagram has multiple dog-related accounts which have hundreds of followers (for example user @dingodoggies, who has 8525 followers. The account simply posts pictures of dogs. The user is a dog walker in Los Angeles and he promotes his service via instagram.

Instagram is free to use and therefore it would be free advertising.

4.5 Social Media Platforms SWOT analysis

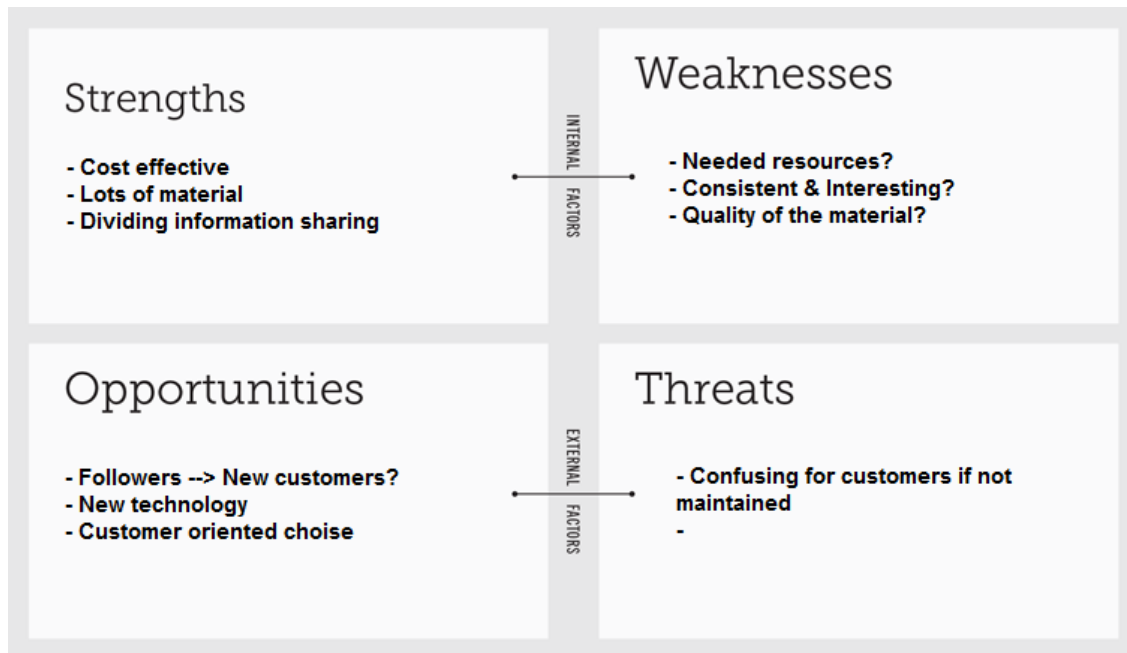


Figure 2. SWOT analysis for Social media platforms

Strenghts & Weaknesses

- Using social media platforms is a very cost effective way of marketing and spreading information. All of the platforms shown above are free to create (might have some additional, optional costs) and to use.
- Homekoirat S&S has a lot of material (pictures, studies, articles etc.) to share so the lack of material is not an issue. Health problems caused by bad indoors air and mold is a growing problem in Finland so there is defilitley and audience for information sharing. Sharing the material in a correct channel is important to reach the correct target audience.
- Does the commissioner have the needed resources for updating and maintaining all the different platforms? Is there enough of material for each platform to keep the channels clean, simple, interesting and consistent – yet different enough for a same follower to keep following all of them.

Opportunities & Threats

- It's rather easy to get followers in social media platforms if one knows the correct way of using each channel. For instance in Instagram one needs to use hashtags in order to spread their pictures to wider audience and for it to appear when users search for pictures in the same category.
- Technology is constantly changing and improving; via social media it's easy to get familiar with the new technology and to get users' experience on it right away.
- Having many social media pages also provides the customer a chance to follow a company in whichever platform they feel most comfortable in.
- If the pages are not maintained carefully a customer can get the impression that a company is not very organized or in a worst case it might seem like the company is out of business if there is no updates and posts for a long period of time.

4.6 Search engine optimization

Search engine optimization (SEO) means getting traffic for the website by using free search results on search engines. All of the major search engines (Google, Yahoo, Bing) use primary search results which means they show ranked results based on what the search engine considers to be most relevant to the user (Search Engine Land, 2016). Search engines work so, that “search engine bots” crawl in the site and areas of the site are scanned. The bots scan headlines, content and descriptions.



Figure 3. A search engine optimization pyramid by Matt Mc Gee

To successfully benefit from SEO one must learn how to implement all the needed factors correctly. According to Matt McGee (Author of Search Engine Land) there are 15 factors needed to be considered when creating a successful search engine optimization. (Small Business Search Marketing, 2008). The bottom row explains how important it is to have a good team working on the project and having a great product or service. Planning and patience is important and defining all the needed resources and strategies in advance is the key. McGee also reminds that not everyone can or even wants to be an SEO professional but he highly recommends to get to know at least the basics of it. The other rows go more deeply in the details on how to achieve the goal:

- **Tools** – Understanding how to use and having access to the needed tools is important (for example: add-ons, bookmarklets and different features of the browsers)
- **Analytics** – Measure and analyse every data you have available and adjust strategies based on the results
- **Keyword research** – Target the right keywords (Homekoirat S&S should use for example the word *homekoirat* (mold-sniffing dogs) or *homepalvelut* (mold detecting services) in the following six places in the website: page title, in at least one link leading to the page, in the URL of the page, in the header of the page, in the page text and in the META description tag
- **Design/Usability** – keeping the website looking aesthetical and clear as well as easy to use
- **Links** – Get the website's link to other relevant pages (for big online newspapers or other relevant to the cause. Homekoirat S&S could try to get their website linked to the Finland's mold allergy association website for example).
- **Content** – Having relevant content in the webpage. Reviews, relevant information and answered questions is important.
- **Crawlability** – Make sure it is easy for the search engine spider to crawl your page. For example, the spider cannot access Flash movies or robot.txt files
- **Social/ Local findability** – Making your page easy to find for your customers. Link as many social media pages together as you can (LinkedIn, facebook, Instagram linked to the website and vice versa) to gain visibility in all forms
- **Reputation management** – Make sure to check and find if there is any negative feedback of your company online and react to it immediately.
- **Trust** – having trustable domain is the key to everything. If the site looks unprofessional the user is most likely to not spend any time in the page.

5 Discussion

As mentioned in the beginning, the commissioner has a well-maintained small business and they have quite many customers. This thesis has concentrated for making small but effective changes to the commissioner's online marketing in order to gain more visibility and be as effective as possible when it comes to using social media platforms. As shown in this thesis, all the suggested changes are quite cost effective and therefore no budget has been added to this plan. The commissioner has provided the author their yearly marketing estimation and according to the author all these changes could easily be made in the limitations of the commissioner's budget.

The five research questions of this thesis were; how to gain more visibility for an existing company? How to develop the online marketing of the company? What are the main factors needed to be considered when marketing a service? What are the best marketing tools for this company and what is included in the marketing plan. All of the questions were answered successfully. In this chapter the research questions and the findings will be summarized.

The first question was to find out a way to gain more visibility for an existing company. The author found out that the commissioner only has a website and a facebook page so it was suggested that the commissioner would create more social media platforms and offer something new for their already existing followers but to also gain more audience. The author suggested competitions and discounts on reservations via the social media platforms. Other suggestion for increasing the awareness of the company was to really define the brand of Homekoirat S&S by creating a brand story and a memorable slogan in addition to their already existing logo and name.

Some of the points defined for the first question were also answers for the second one; how to develop the online marketing of Homekoirat S&S. This question was really the core in which the whole thesis has been created around. The online marketing of Homekoirat S&S was previously only created around of the website and the facebook site. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the author suggested creating more social media platforms and mentioned that the absolute key element for success in this is to maintain the pages well. Also the author explained about search engine optimization, which, if done well, will lead more possible customers to the commissioner's website.

The author made some improvement suggestions about the commissioner's website (which are completely and only the author's own suggestions and opinions) concerning

the colours and other visual elements. Basically the core suggestion is to simplify and “clean” the page by doing small changes. The author also created a visual example of what the website could look like, by creating an example website. The example site is not in use nor will never be. It will be deleted after this thesis has been assessed and archived.

The third problem was to find out what are the main factors one needs to consider when marketing a service. This was answered in the very beginning; the service provider needs to stand out and offer something new. In order to achieve these points the author suggested that Homekoirat S&S would create the brand (as mentioned already) to make a good first impression. This is also linked to the improvements of the website; the commissioner only has one chance to make a first impression with the possible customer. Making small changes to make the website and other platforms look more professional might be the key to catch the customer’s eye.

Fourth question was to find out what are the best marketing tools for Homekoirat S&S to use. This question was already answered multiple times in the previous paragraphs; branding. Also making all of the platforms (website and social medias) look consistent is important. The author also conducted three qualitative interviews for the commissioner’s previous customers and created “customer stories” for the commissioner to use on their website as references.

The final research question was to create the marketing plan and to figure out what to include in it. The author focused only on improving the online marketing plan and therefore no complete marketing plan is offered. In the online marketing plan the author has included all of the points mentioned before; branding and how to do it, what improvements to do for the website, what social media platforms to create (Instagram, LinkedIn) and how to improve the existing one(s) (Facebook and website) and also detailed notes about the search engine optimization and its’ benefits.

This thesis was written due to the commissioner’s request and due to the joint understanding of the author and the commissioner. The base and the research questions were written by the author and then accepted by the commissioner. The backbone of this thesis is created by the author in a way she evaluated would be most interesting and offer the best results for the commissioner Homekoirat S&S.

As there are no major changes listed in this thesis, the risks of not succeeding or financial risks for the commissioner are close to zero if the commissioner decides to follow the im-

provement suggestions provided by the author. As creating and using social media platforms is quite big part of the provided improvement ideas, it needs to be mentioned that if the commissioner decides to create the pages but doesn't have the needed resources to maintain them, the social media platforms will end up being more like a threat than an opportunity. Poorly maintained social media pages will look very bad in the eyes of the consumers; it will create doubts if the company even exist anymore, and if the page and the information provided there can be trusted if it has lastly been updated (for example) six months ago. All the pages should be linked to each other so this creates the need to make them consistent but not exactly the same; this raises the concern if the commissioner will have enough material to maintain several pages and make all of them interesting enough for people to follow possibly all of them.

Other concern of the author is if the consumer has the needed resources or skills to make the changes to the website or does the commissioner need to hire someone to change the HTML code of the site. That has not been taken into consideration when evaluating the costs of the changes.

Overall creating this thesis was a pleasure and working with such a great commissioner as Homekoirat S&S has been, has really made this project very educating and fun even. Hopefully the commissioner will find at least some of the suggestions useful and consider all the suggestions made.

6 References

- DIY (Development, Impact & You 2014). Practical tools to trigger & support social innovation. URL: <http://diytoolkit.org/tools/swot-analysis-2/> Accessed: 14 march 2016
- The Entrepreneur, 2016. The basics of branding. URL: <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/77408> Accessed :11 January 2016.
- Forbes, 2013. How to write brand stories that build emotional connections. URL: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/work-in-progress/2013/09/24/how-to-write-brand-stories-that-build-emotional-connections/#66471f3062e2> Accessed: 10 February 2016.
- Forbes, 2015. The world's most valuable brands. URL: <http://www.forbes.com/powerful-brands/> Accessed: 18 January 2016.
- Google, 2016. PDF guide to search engine optimization. URL: <http://static.googleusercontent.com/media/www.google.com/en//webmasters/docs/search-engine-optimization-starter-guide.pdf> Accessed: 15 February 2016.
- Helsingin Sanomat, 2016. Price list for ads. URL: http://files.snstatic.fi/HS/2016/3/Sanoma_Media_Hinnasto_2016/#/12/ Accessed: 15 March 2016
- Homekoirat S&S 2016. Commissioner's website. URL: <http://www.homekoiratsjas.fi/index.php> Accessed: 08 January 2016.
- Koozai, 2014. 6 benefits of using Instagram for your business. URL: <https://www.koozai.com/blog/social-media/6-key-benefits-using-instagram-business/> Accessed: 08 February 2016.
- Management Study Guide, 2016. Services marketing – definition and characteristics. URL: <http://www.managementstudyguide.com/definition-and-characteristics-of-services.htm> Accessed: 08 January 2016.
- Management study guide, 2016. Services marketin, definition of moment of truth. URL: <http://www.managementstudyguide.com/moment-of-truth-services-marketing.htm> Accessed: 10 January 2016.
- MOZ, 2016. Beginners guide to SEO. URL: <https://moz.com/beginners-guide-to-seo> Accessed: 15 February 2016.
- Marketing teacher, 2016. Introduction to services marketing. URL: <http://www.marketingteacher.com/introduction-to-services-marketing/> Accessed: 08 January 2016.
- Nestle, 2016. Vision. URL: <http://www.nestle.com/randd/ourvision> Accessed: 18 January 2016.
- Nuanced media, 2011. 3 reasons your business will benefit from LinkedIn. URL:

<http://nuancedmedia.com/3-reasons-your-business-will-benefit-from-linkedin/> Accessed: 08 February 2016.

ROVAHA, Ronald Van Haaften, 2016. Marketing, Strategy & Management; brand elements. URL:
<http://www.van-haaften.nl/branding/corporate-branding/77-brand-elements> Accessed: 08 February 2016.

Search Engine Land, 2016. What is SEO? URL:
<http://searchengineland.com/guide/what-is-seo> Accessed: 15 February 2016.

Small Business Search Marketing, 2007. A beginner's SEO toolbox. URL:
<http://www.smallbusinesssem.com/a-beginners-seo-toolbox/885/> Accessed: 17 February 2016)

Small Business Search Marketing, 2008. Common crawlability mistakes. URL:
<http://www.smallbusinesssem.com/5-common-crawlability-mistakes/1198/> Accessed: 17.02.2016.

Small Business Search Marketing, 2007. Keywords for SEO, URL:
<http://www.smallbusinesssem.com/i-have-my-keywords-now-what/700/> Accessed: 17

Small Business Search Marketing, 2008. The SEO success pyramid. (Figure 1) URL:
<http://www.smallbusinesssem.com/the-seo-success-pyramid/971/> Accessed: 15 February

Small Business, 2016. Tools used in market research. URL:
<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/tools-used-market-research-17205.html> Accessed: 18 January 2016.

Steph Hyken, 2016. Create an amazing customer service experience. URL:
<http://hyken.com/> Accessed: 11 January 2016.

TechnoPedia, 2016. Definition of online marketing. URL:
<https://www.techopedia.com/definition/26363/online-marketing> Accessed: 10 January 2016.

University of Southern California, 2010. Consumer behavior, the psychology of marketing. URL:
<http://www.consumerpsychologist.com/> Accessed: 11 January 2016.

2016. (figure 1)

Wordpress. An example webpage created by the author: URL:
www.esimerkkihomekoirat.wordpress.com Accessed: 22 February 2016.

Fill, C; 2002, Marketing Communications; Contexts, Strategies and Applications, third edition

Grönroos, C; 2007, Service management and marketing; Customer management in service competition, third edition

Stickdorn, M; Schneider, J, 2011, This is service design thinking

7 Appendixes

Appendix 1. Customer interview(s)

Perheen homepainajainen

Olin ostanut talon syksyllä 2014 heti pintaremontin valmistumisen jälkeen. Remontin suoritti talon myyjä, joka oli katto- ja saneerausalalla toimiva pieni yritys. Noin 3 viikkoa muuton jälkeen minä ja perheeni aloimme sairastella. Päänsärkyä, korvien kutinaa, hengitystieinfektioita (yskää, keuhkoputkentulehdus, keuhkokuume), poskiontelotulehdus, silmäoireita, selittämätöntä väsymystä, kuumeilua, iho-oireita, korvatulehdus, nenäverenvuotoa jne. Syntyi vahva epäily siitä, että ostamassamme talossa oli jotain vialla. Tammikuussa 2015 sain ”kyliltä kuulla”, että talossamme voisi olla homeongelmaa, sillä siellä oli tehty homekoirakartoitus keväällä 2014 ja tämän kartoituksen seurauksena myyjältä oli peruuntunut talosta valmisteilla ollut kauppa. Tämän kartoituksen jälkeen taloa myös oli alettu remontoida.

Päädyin Homekoirat S&S:ään toisen homekoirayrittäjän suosituksesta. Yrityksenä Homekoirat S&S oli kohtuullisen etäisyyden päässä tutkittavasta kohteesta. He myös pystyivät tekemään tutkimuksen suht nopealla aikataululla.

Kokemus kaiken kaikkiaan oli hermoja raastava, henkisesti ja taloudellisesti painajaismainen. Käsittämätön ja uskomaton, pohjattomalta tuntunut suo, josta selviytyminen tuntui mahdottomalta.

Homekoirien käytön osuus tässä suossa oli silti positiivinen kokemus. Homekoirat S&S:n tekemän kartoituksen jälkeen sain varmuuden siitä, että terveydelliset ongelmat johtuvat talostamme. Sain tietoa ja varmuutta siihen, mitä teen seuraavaksi. Väheksyä ei myöskään pidä koiraohjaajien empaattisuutta ja selkeyttä karun tutkimustuloksen varmistuttua. Olo itsellä oli silloin epätodellinen ja tyrmistynyt. He selkeyttivät tilanteen ja vastasivat mieleeni tulleisiin kysymyksiin. Arvostankin sitä, että heillä oli aikaa minulle ja asialle myös kartoituksen teon jälkeen. Sain kysyä ehkä samaakin asiaa monta kertaa ja he vastasivat minulle selkeästi. Sain itselleni paljon tietoa ja varmuutta tulevaan taistoon. Koirien käynti oli minulle alku. Se oli alku taistelulle vääryyttä ja homepainajaista vastaan.

Kartoituksen oleelliset hyödyt olivat homeongelman olemassaolon varmistuminen/vahvistaminen, hyvät, konkreettiset neuvot siihen, että mitä kannattaa tehdä seuraavaksi (esim. etsi pätevä rakennusterveysasiantuntija, etsi tavarantarkastaja, etsi asianajaja sekä kartoituksen jälkeen nopeasti saatu selkeä, informatiivinen ja asiantunteva raportti (raporttia käytettiin hyväksi myöhemmin mm. rakenneavauspaikkojen valinnassa).

Tarina kuitenkin päättyi onnellisesti. Tai ainakin niin onnellisesti kuin tällaiset tarinat voivat päättyä.

Heti koiratutkimuksen jälkeen muutimme talosta pois, ensin väliaikaismajoitukseen ystävien luo, myöhemmin vuokra-asuntoon. Lähes kaikki irtaimisto meni meillä uusiksi.

Terveydelliset ongelmat helpottivat melko pian talosta poismuuton jälkeen. Noin neljän kuukauden kuluttua saattoi varovaisesti sanoa meidän olevan oireettomia. Toki vahva altistuminen tietyille homeille meille jäi ja varmasti tulevaisuudessa oireilemme mahdollisille sisäilmaongelmille muita, altistumattomia, herkemmin, mutta tällä hetkellä arvioituna, mitään pysyvää terveydellistä haittaa meille ei jäänyt.

Talossa tehtiin kevään ja alkukesän 2015 aikana sisäilmatutkimus, rakenneavauksia, kosteusmittauksia ja tavarantarkastus. Marraskuun alussa 2015 myyjä suostui kaupanpurkuun ilman oikeusprosessia. Kauppahinta palautettiin meille täysmääräisenä. Taloon liittyvät tutkimuskulut maksoi myyjä, tavarantarkastuskulut maksettiin puoliksi. Muita asiaan liittyviä kuluja (asianajaja, sijaisasuminen, irtaimisto) ja menetyksiä ei korvattu. Silti, homepainajaisemme oli vihdoin ohi ja elämä ilman jatkuvaa stressaamista hometilanteesta sai taas jatkua.

Reetta, Savitaipale

Eroon homeasunnosta

Ensimmäisen kerran käytin homekoirien palveluita 80-luvulla valmistuneen kaksikerroksen rivitalon tarkistamiseen. Noin kaksi kuukautta muuttomme jälkeen aloin aistimaan maakellarin multaista hajua ja halusin tarkistaa tilanteen. Taloyhtiö ei suostunut tutkimaan asiaa vaan meidän piti selvittää se omakustanteisesti, luvattiin kuitenkin korvata jos jotain löytyy.

Koirien käyttämiseen päädyimme, sillä se on kustannustehokkaampaa kuin rakenteiden avaaminen ja näytteidenotto. Soittelimme ympäriinsä ja suosituksien kautta päädyimme käyttämään Homekoirat S&S:ää.

Homekoirat merkkasivat kiinteistössä korvausilmavuodon, eli koneellinen ilmanpoisto veti korvausilman lattianrajasta, mikä oli huonosti eristetty. Taloyhtiö ei suostunut remonttiin joten päädyimme laittamaan kohteen uudelleen myyntiin. Myynnistä saimme valitettavasti tappiollisen hinnan, mutta parempi niin, kuin jäädä hometaloon. Uudet ostajat saivat luonnollisesti kopion tutkintaraportista ja olivat näin ollen tietoisia tarvittavista korjauksista ja siitä, että taloyhtiö ei todennäköisesti osallistuisi remontin kustannuksiin lainkaan.

Kokemus koirien käyttämisestä oli kuitenkin niinkin positiivinen, että olemme päätyneet käyttämään koiria edelleen kun olemme ostamassa tai myymässä kohdetta.

Anna, Mikkeli

Vastaus sairastelukierteeseen

Vuonna 2012 aloin ihmettelemään pitkään jatkunutta, epätavallista sairastelukierrettä. Oireina oli muun muassa pitkittyneitä hengitystieoireita, kuivaa yskää, poskiontelotulehduksia ja jatkuvaa päänsärkyä.

Valitsin Homekoirat S&S tekemään tutkimuksen, sillä minulla oli ennestään tietoa yrityksestä ja heidän toiminnastaan. Olin jo ennestään tutustunut homekoirien toimintaan ja koin omaavani jo suht paljon tietoa koirien käyttämisestä homeen etsinnässä, joten valinta käyttää homekoiria oli aika itsestään selvä.

Kokemuksena epäily homeesta omassa kiinteistössä ei tietenkään ikinä ole kivaa ja varsinkin diagnoosin varmistuessa elämä muuttuu pelkäksi selvittelyksi ja remonttityömaaksi. Homekoirat S&S toiminta kuitenkin oli moitteetonta ja asiallista, kiitos heille siitä.

Tarina on vieläkin kesken vielä kaikkien näiden vuosien jälkeen ja taistelua käydään vieläkin päivittäin kaikkien asianomasisten kesken, mutta eteenpäin on mentävä!

Saara, Mikkeli